EXETER-WEST GREENWICH August 24, 2010 REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

#### **MINUTES**

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. – Sr. High School Library. Members present were Susan DeSack, Chairperson; Teri Maia-Cicero, Vice-Chairperson; Gregory Coutcher, Clerk; Mark Rafanelli; Mary Walsh, (arrived at 6:04 p.m.); Valerie Zuercher; and Robert Bollengier. Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar was present. Director of Administration Robert V. Ross and Director of Special Services Carmella Farrar were absent.

ORDER – Chair DeSack called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all and Member Rafanelli read the District Mission Statement.

**Open Forum – None** 

**Presentation - None** 

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA- Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda.

Member Bollengier made a motion to accept the consent agenda.

Clerk Coutcher seconded the motion. Voted 6 – 0 in favor.

#### The following items were approved:

- A. Approval of Minutes Regular Minutes of August 10, 2010; Executive Session Minutes of June 22, 2010; Executive Session Minutes of July 20, 2010
- **B. Personnel Items**
- 1. Appointments
- 2. Leaves of Absence
- 3. Resignations
- 4. Grievances
- 5. Non-Renewals
- 6. Recalls
- 7. Sabbaticals
- C. Bills In the amount of \$284,888.39: Accruals in the amount of 6,670.31
- D. Home School Approvals
- 1. PARENTEAU Tyler
- 2. GREENE Kelsey, Nicolette, Courtney, Hannah, Mason, Noah, Chloe

**End Consent Agenda** 

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Final Budget 2010 – 2011 – Dr. Geismar requested to continue this item to the next regular meeting agenda since Director of Administration Robert Ross is absent from tonight's meeting.

Member Walsh arrived at this time, (6:04 p.m.).

Member Bollengier referenced the fact that the 2010 – 2011 Budget is in a new format and asked if the Monthly Budget Summary report can be reworked to match tonight's format in order to compare the status of line accounts. Dr. Geismar agreed to try to bring back the format as requested. Chair DeSack advised that it may be overly time consuming to fulfill this request and asked the Superintendent to inform the School Committee if it is possible.

### Correspondence - None

NEW BUSINESS – Approved Charter Amendments Discussion – Dr. Geismar reported that Attorney Brad Gorham has incorporated the charter amendments into the charter. If the School Committee is satisfied that the charter as amended is correct, the charter will go to Senator Frank Maher who has agreed to take the appropriate action at the General Assembly to get the legislative action approved. Dr. Geismar told the committee that he met with the Exeter and West Greenwich Board of Canvassers last week to discuss the process for

an all-day referendum. It was a lengthy discussion and the canvassers requested that he research other districts' policies and only procedures. Chariho is the district that holds an all-day-referendum to vote on a budget. He said that in Chariho there are no amendments. They only vote on the budget. Dr. Geismar said that he and the canvassers have concerns as to how to display the amendments on the ballot. The charter amendments indicate that amendments shall be approved by majority vote of the two towns combined. However, it does not say what the majority is. Chair DeSack guestioned how the Finance/Charter Review Subcommittee envisioned the all-day referendum. A discussion followed and members put forth concerns, ideas, and comments relating to the subcommittees' intent, majority vote percentages, the presentation of the ballot, how to work the amendments with an all-day referendum, and the probability that a second all-day-referendum will be necessary. Consensus of the committee was to have Dr. Geismar contact Attorney Gorham to seek clarification and incorporate language into the document depicting what the majority means and how the ballot shall be presented to voters.

Approve Science Textbooks – Member Bollengier made a motion to approve the textbooks listed, Environment, the Science Behind the Stories and Environmental Science as set out in the agenda request numbered 0004. Vice Chair Cicero seconded the motion. Voted 7 - 0 in favor. The motion passed.

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Strategic Plan Discussion – Dr. Geismar referenced packet enclosures outlining the Strategic Planning Process and he disseminated his proposed Strategic Plan Committee makeup and meeting schedule. He reminded the School Committee that Chair DeSack and Members Rafanelli and Zuercher are the three School Committee representatives on the District Improvement Committee. Dr. Geismar said he plans to proceed with the process and bring a new plan to the School Committee for approval by the end of October or beginning of November. He said he will be confirming the dates and times of meetings with members.

Establish Grant Priorities & Approve Expenditure for Grant Writer – Dr. Geismar reported that he met with an outstanding grant writer and they brainstormed about potential fundraising focus areas such as School Safety, the School Resource Officer, After School Programming, Transportation, Adult Education Programs, and School Beautification. Dr. Geismar requested approval of the School Committee for the expenditure for the grant writer. Chair DeSack pointed out that since the grant writer is in the budget, the School Committee does not need to approve the expenditure.

In response to members' clarifying questions, Dr. Geismar said the grant writer fee is not contingent on the outcome, and the grant writer

will be available to groups such as EWG Boosters and POPS.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - Sr. Project Steering Committee/High School Diploma System Update - Principal Butler reported that he received word two-weeks ago from the RI Department of Education, (RIDE) of approval for the changes submitted to RIDE at the recommendation of the Senior Project Steering Committee. Principal Butler disseminated handouts, referenced the document illustrating the approved changes, and explained that all items in red are no longer part of the current Senior Project. There has been a benchmark reduction from 30 to 16. Chair DeSack recommended moving up the timeline to before Winter Break so students can start to focus on college applications after the break. Principal Butler agreed. He said that, this year's junior class would be the first class that will embrace the new standards for state testing performance proficiencies. They will be required to meet all three requirements, (complete 20 credits worth of classes; submit a senior project or portfolio; and score at least "partially-proficient" on standardized tests in English and math) to be eligible to receive a high school diploma. Vice Chair Cicero reported that RIDE said that EWG is still doing more than what is required. She said that she is interested to ask RIDE for a direct response to the School Committee as to what the exact requirements are and what EWG is doing that is above and beyond those requirements. At the direction of Chair DeSack, Principal Butler agreed to make that inquiry. In response to Member Bollengier's inquiry, Vice Chair Cicero said she wishes to ask the question because of fiscal impact. Member Zuercher said she agrees with Vice Chair Cicero. Vice Chair Cicero pointed out that although benchmarks have been reduced from 30 to 16, students are still completing 30 benchmarks, but are only required to do 16.

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Dr. Geismar told the School Committee that EWG received a very good report last year by the Commissioner's Review. However, RIDE will be back to check on three remaining issues - Gap Analysis, RTI, and Math Pathways. Dr. Geismar said that the district is still working and is on target to become fully approved. He added that presently there are no school districts that are approved and he thanked Principal Butler and his staff for all their hard work. Member Rafanelli said he is not in favor to go barebones with Senior Project. He voiced his opinion that the committee owes it to students not to shortchange them. Principal Butler told the School Committee that the Board of Regents will meet tomorrow to discuss what to do with the NECAP dilemma. The meeting will take place at RIDE (fourth floor) at 11:00 a.m. He invited available members to attend. Vice Chair Cicero said that she would attend. Lastly, Principal Butler reported that Rhode Island was one of the top ten in Race to the Top. Rhode Island will receive 75 million dollars. Commissioner Gist has said she will not lower the standards, however, she may say that only two of the three requirements will be mandatory. Principal Butler said that he is

comfortable with students knowing that State Assessments count for something now.

Capital Project Update – Superintendent Geismar reported that Metcalf School's water has been cleared for use. Architect Luis Torrado called yesterday and said that he expects he will get approval on Thursday to order the new water tank. Dr. Geismar said that he would bring more information to the next meeting.

#### Reports/Comments -

Important Dates and Meetings – Friday, August 27, 2010-New Staff Training: Monday, August 30, 2010-Techer Orientation: Tuesday, August 31, 2010-First Day of School K – 12; Tuesday, September 14, 2010-School Committee Meeting; Tuesday, September 28, 2010-School Committee Meeting

EXECUTIVE SESSION - RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 - None

Adjournment – Vice Chair Cicero moved to adjourn. Member Rafanelli seconded the motion. Voted 7 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO
CLERK